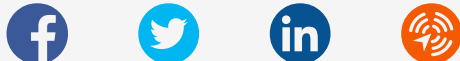



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Promoting productive workplaces through safety and health research 

NIOSH Celebrates 25TH Anniversary

NIOSH Update:

Monday, April 29, 1996

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The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) today commemorated their 25th anniversary in a joint event with the Smithsonian Institution to highlight the progress made since 1971 in protecting workers from job-related injuries and illnesses, and to note the challenges that still lie ahead.

In a ceremony at the National Museum of American History, OSHA and NIOSH donated to the Smithsonian several items of historical significance.

OSHA is part of the Department of Labor, and NIOSH is part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in the Department of Health and Human Services. Both programs were created under the Occupational Safety and Health Act, a bipartisan measure enacted on Dec. 29, 1970, and signed by President Richard M. Nixon. OSHA and NIOSH began operations on April 29, 1971.

OSHA seeks to prevent workplace injuries, illnesses and fatalities by setting and enforcing occupational safety and health standards, promoting safety and health training and education, and working with stakeholders to develop innovative and creative approaches to preventing workplace hazards.

NIOSH conducts research to identify the causes of work-related injuries, illnesses and fatalities, evaluate the hazards of new technologies and work practices, and create ways to control hazards so that workers are protected. NIOSH also supports university programs to train occupational safety and health professionals for the Nation and makes recommendations regarding occupational safety and health standards.

OSHA and NIOSH have led tremendous strides in making workplaces safe and healthful, but job-related injuries and diseases continue to take serious human and economic tolls, officials from DOL and HHS said today in conjunction with the anniversary. According to the latest annual figures by the Department of Labor, an estimated 6.3 million workers are injured on the job and 515,000 suffer job-related illnesses yearly.

These figures highlight the continued need for vigorous leadership and partnership by OSHA and NIOSH in national efforts to protect the lives and well-being of workers, officials declared.

“While many challenges remain, progress in workplace safety and health has been remarkable,” Secretary of Labor Robert B. Reich said. “Hundreds of thousands of workers owe their lives to OSHA’s protective standards. Brown lung — the cotton dust disease — is gone; fewer workers are dying in trenching accidents; fewer are losing fingers to unguarded machinery; fewer are exposed to hazardous chemicals; and fewer die in grain elevator explosions.”

“When Congress passed the Occupational Safety and Health Act, they promised that it would help assure a safe and healthful workplace for every American,” Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna E. Shalala said. “For 25 years, NIOSH has worked with our partners to make good on that promise. But, our work is far from done. Our challenge is to move forward — to continue to put the best science in the world to use — creating American workplaces that are safe, efficient, and second to none.”

“NIOSH’s research leadership and its dedication to protecting workers from health and safety hazards are recognized world-wide,” said CDC Director David Satcher, M.D. “Thanks in large measure to NIOSH’s efforts, the Nation has made dramatic advancements in recognizing that safe and healthful workplaces are an integral part of good public health, and that the tools we use to curb infectious diseases also work against occupational diseases — knowledge, timely intervention, and prevention.”





“We are excited about the future and the opportunity to join with stakeholders and partners such as NIOSH and states operating their own safety and health programs to identify problem areas and then fashion practical solutions to keep employees safe and healthy,” Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health Joseph A. Dear said.

“As we observe OSHA and NIOSH’s past successes, it is also fitting that we consider ways to address new concerns created by changes in the modern workplace,” said NIOSH Director Linda Rosenstock, M.D. “The National Occupational Research Agenda, which NIOSH released today, is the first step in a collaborative U.S. effort to guide vital safety and health research over the next decade.”

“Anniversaries are important because they allow us to reflect on the past: to give credit to those who have surmounted hurdles and to provide an opportunity to consider the critical junctures that shape our lives today,” said National Museum of American History Director Spencer R. Crew.

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